

Paribbājaka Brāhmaṇa Sutta

The Brahmin Wanderer Discourse

[The purpose of the Dharma]

(Āṅguttara Nikāya 3.54/1:157 f)

Translated by Piya Tan ©2005

(1) Introduction

This structure of this sutta is similar to that of **the (Sandiṭṭhika Dhamma) Brāhmaṇa Sutta** (A 3.53),¹ that immediately follows it in the Brāhmaṇa Vagga of the Āṅguttara Nikāya, except that the questioner is a brahmin wanderer. Both this sutta and the latter deal with the three unwholesome roots (*akusala mūla*) in relation to self, other and both, but the latter adds the perspective of the three doors of action (the body, speech and mind) and what is profitable for reaching the spiritual goal:

(Sandiṭṭhika Dhamma) Brāhmaṇa Sutta (A 3.53):	the three points (self, other, and both);
Brāhmaṇa Paribbājaka Sutta (A 3.54):	the three points, the three doors of action, and what is profitable for the spiritual goal (<i>attha</i>).

Both the suttas explain the six qualities of the Dharma in connection with the overcoming of the three unwholesome roots.²

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¹ A 3.54/1:157 f.

² See **(Sandiṭṭhika Dhamma) Brāhmaṇa S** (3.53/1:156 f) = SD 15.8a Introd.

The Brahmin Wanderer Discourse

(A 3.54/1:157 f)

The Dharma

1 Then a certain brahmin wanderer went up to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, the brahmin wanderer sat down at one side. Sitting thus as one side, he said this to the Blessed One:

“Master, Gotama, ‘The Dharma is visible here and now (*sandiṭṭhika*),’ so it is said. In what way is the Dharma visible here and now, having nothing to do with time (*akālika*), inviting one to come and see (*ehi,passika*), onward-leading (*opanayika*), to be seen by the wise for himself (*paccattam veditabbo viññūhi*)?”³

I. Lust and non-lust

2 (a) “Brahmin, when one is dyed [impassioned] with **lust**, overpowered by it, the mind utterly given over to it, then one plans [thinks of]⁴ one’s own affliction, or another’s affliction, or the affliction of both. One feels physical pain and mental pain. [158]

(b) But when lust is abandoned, then one does not plan one’s own affliction, nor another’s affliction, nor the affliction of both. One does not feel physical pain nor mental pain.⁵

3 (c) Brahmin, when one is dyed [impassioned] with lust, overpowered by it, one conducts oneself unwholesomely through the body, through speech, and through the mind.

(d) But when lust is abandoned, one does not conduct oneself unwholesomely through the body, through speech, and through the mind.

4 (e) Brahmin, when one is dyed [impassioned] with lust, overpowered by it, the mind utterly given over to it, one does not know as it really is what is profitable [the goal] for oneself, for others, or for both.

(f) But when lust is abandoned, one knows as it really is what is profitable [the goal] for oneself, for others, or for both.

5 (g) In this way, brahmin, the Dharma is visible here and now, having nothing to do with time, inviting one to come and see, onward-leading, to be seen by the wise for himself.

II. Hate and non-hate

6 (a) “Brahmin, when one is riled by **hate**, overpowered by it, the mind utterly given over to it, then one plans [thinks of] one’s own affliction, or another’s affliction, or the affliction of both. One feels physical pain and mental pain.

(b) But when hate is abandoned, then one does not plan one’s own affliction, nor another’s affliction, nor the affliction of both. One does not feel physical pain nor mental pain.

³ These are the qualities of the Dharma in the recollection of the Dharma (*dhammānussati*), the full formula of which is: *Svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo sandiṭṭhiko akāliko ehi,passiko opanāyiko paccattam veditabbo viññūhī ti* (Well taught is the Dharma,...) For a detailed discussion, see Vism 7.86-88/213-218. The impression one gets from this question is that the key virtue of the Dharma is the first, that “the Dharma is visible here and now (*sandiṭṭhika*).” The other five virtues are aspect of this first virtue. See Introd.

⁴ *Ceteti*, usu tr “he thinks,” but here (with dat) is contextually best rendered as “he ponders, thinks over, imagines, thinks out, design, schemes, intends, plans” (PED): see also S 2:65. One might, eg, say, “He thinks of becoming a monk.”

⁵ This sentence, and the other two [6b, 10b] means that although pain does arise in the body and negative states may arise in the mind (as result of latent tendencies), one is not troubled by them. As such, it is better to render *paṭi-samvedeti* as “he feels,” rather than “he experiences.”

7 (c) Brahmin, when one is riled by hate, overpowered by it, one conducts oneself unwholesomely through the body, through speech, and through the mind.

(d) But when hate is abandoned, one does not conduct oneself unwholesomely through the body, through speech, and through the mind.

8 (e) Brahmin, when one is riled by hate, overpowered by it, the mind utterly given over to it, one does not know as it really is what is profitable [the goal] for oneself, for others, or for both.

(f) But when hate is abandoned, one knows as it really is what is profitable [the goal] for oneself, for others, or for both.

9 (g) In this way, brahmin, the Dharma is visible here and now, having nothing to do with time, inviting one to come and see, onward-leading, to be seen by the wise for himself.

III. Delusion and non-delusion

10 (a) “Brahmin, when one is confused by **delusion**, overpowered by it, the mind utterly given over to it, then one plans [thinks of] one’s own affliction, or another’s affliction, or the affliction of both. One feels physical pain and mental pain.

(b) But when delusion is abandoned, then one does not plan one’s own affliction, nor another’s affliction, nor the affliction of both. One does not feel physical pain nor mental pain.

11 (c) Brahmin, when one is confused by delusion, overpowered by it, one conducts oneself unwholesomely through the body, through speech, and through the mind.

(d) But when delusion is abandoned, one does not conduct oneself unwholesomely through the body, through speech, and through the mind.

12 (e) Brahmin, when one is confused by delusion, overpowered by it, the mind utterly given over to it, one does not know as it really is what is profitable [the goal] for oneself, for others, or for both.

(f) But when hate is abandoned, one knows as it really is what is profitable [the goal] for oneself, for others, or for both.

13 (g) In this way, brahmin, the Dharma is visible here and now, having nothing to do with time, inviting one to come and see, onward-leading, to be seen by the wise for himself.

The brahmin goes for refuge

14 “Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent! Master Gotama! Just as if one were to place upright what had been overturned, were to reveal what was hidden, were to show the way to one who was lost, or were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way, in numerous ways, has the Dharma been made clear by the Blessed Gotama.

I go to the Blessed Gotama for refuge, to the Dharma, and to the community of monks.”

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